

# How to Write a Silly Song

This is a song I wrote in 2009 when I was working as a street sweeper for Exeter City Council, based at the recycling centre on Exton Road, Marsh Barton.

The original idea was to write something about the bizarre practice of making the red colour of lipstick by including cochineal (beetle's blood) as an ingredient. These days most makeup is cruelty free but, particularly in former times, lovers were kissing lips smeared with beetle's blood. Cochineal was also used as a colourant in red wine.

I started from the word "lips" and, just for fun, I decided to make every line of the song rhyme with lips.

These were the possible words I could use to rhyme with lips: "blips, chips, clips, dips, Fripp's, flips, grips, hips, kips, nips, quips, rips, tips, trips, whips, zips".

"Frapp's" would be a reference to Robert Frapp, the guitarist.

These are the lyrics I wrote:

Kissing your beetle bloodied lips  
Sinking the king of kingdom's ships  
Turning upon your flipping hips  
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

In and out he quickly nips  
down by the old recycling tips  
the wage slave under money's whips  
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

The radar screen a thousand blips  
a stolen riff of Miles' or Frapp's  
H.G. wakes halfway through kips  
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

A thousand buttons zips and clips  
the zoo acquired from all your trips  
all kinds in kindness cruelty dips  
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

His intellect must come to grips  
to make the tea she slowly sips  
while staring at the half cold chips  
Kissing your beetle bloodied lips

An audio file of "Kissing Your Beetle Bloodied Lips" is available somewhere close to this page on the same site.

As you can see, the references to cruelty to animals and to the recycling centre where I was working both became part of the song. There's a reference to "99 Red Balloons" on the rhyme "blips" and a reference to riffs by Miles Davis or Robert Frapp. "H.G. wakes" is a reference to H. G. Wells' book "The Sleeper Awakes" and also to the same author's "Kipps:

The Story of a Simple Soul". In English slang "to kip" means to get some sleep. Both of these H. G. Wells stories deal with the theme of rich and poor. "99 Red Balloons" was about cold war paranoia between capitalist West Germany and communist East Germany.

All of these lyrics are about rich/poor, environment, recycling, cruelty, kindness, slavery/bondage and the whole dynamic range of relationships between haves and have nots in a divided society on the brink of environmental disaster. But I wrapped it up in a very mild and silly seeming song lyric and I recorded it in a style halfway between Jake Thackery ("Lah di Dah") and The Rutles ("Another Day").

And that is how to write a silly song.